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A security officer at the Soviet Embassy, Vyacheslav Borovikov, pointing to spot where he said an electronic listening device had been found in the new embassy compound in Washington.

The Walls Had Ears, Russians Show

By JOEL BRINKLEY
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WASHINGTON, April 10 — Soviet diplomats led a fractious parade of American journalists through the new Russian embassy compound today in a sometimes comical news event intended to show off electronic eavesdropping equipment they said they had just found concealed in window frames and air-conditioning ducts.

The unusual staging was the latest in an escalating series of espionage charges and countercharges between Washington and Moscow over the last two weeks. It followed a similar Soviet Government presentation for the press in Moscow on Thursday.

But neither the Russians nor the American journalists seemed to take today's event too seriously. The State Department said it would have no comment.

During a news conference, given in a large new theater just before the tour, Minister Counselor Yevgeny G. Kutovoi described in good-humored tones how his staff had found "many dozens of eavesdropping devices" embedded in holes hand-carved in the Georgia marble of one of the buildings in the new complex. He described them as "the infamous collection of the American special services."

Waves 'Might Not Be Harmless'

As he spoke, behind him on the stage the curtain parted and spotlights illuminated several small transmitters, microphones, batteries and loops of wire, all displayed on formal presentation stands arrayed before a magenta curtain.

With a long wooden pointer and a sardonic tone, an embassy security officer, Vyacheslav Borovikov, offered an almost scholarly description of each device in turn. "On this display you see an entire radio sys-

tem," Mr. Borovikov said, pointing to wire coils dangling from the display board. He said the system's batteries could be "recharged from the outside," and accused the United States of "bombarding" the building with special battery-recharging waves "that might not be entirely harmless."

As if that were not enough, he said, the United States had been aiming laser-beam listening devices at embassy windows, eavesdropping on conversations by picking up vibrations from the glass. In one case, he said, a Soviet diplomat had looked out his apartment window and, to his surprise, "he received a laser stroke in the eye."

American intelligence officials say Soviet intelligence officers working from this same embassy compound have been directing similar laser equipment at United States Government buildings.

Music in the Windows

As a result, in some offices the Government has implanted tiny loudspeakers that play music through the windows frames. The idea is that instead of sensitive conversations the K.G.B., the Soviet state security agency, might hear Mantovani.

Today, Mr. Borovikov acknowledged that laser devices are widely available, but he said the United States had the clear technological edge in microphones of the sort the Russians said they had discovered implanted in their embassy buildings.

None of the devices shown had markings indicating their origin, although one piece of wire was marked "Made in Canada." Mr. Borovikov said that that marking was probably a bit of clever subterfuge.

The Russians said they had spent tens of thousands of dollars to find all the listening devices, remove them and repair the damage.